

TRUSTEE INFORMATION PACK

The Vine Centre is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) based in Aldershot, Hampshire which serves the community of Rushmoor and the surrounding areas. The CIO was established on 25th February 2021, and prior to that was an unincorporated Charity set up in 1986. We are well known within the local area and have a proven track record of offering high level support services. Our clients include those who may be at risk of becoming homeless, living in poverty, socially isolated or are long-term unemployed. Many have other complex needs, both physical and emotional, including mental health issues, anger management, alcohol and drug dependency, social isolation and debt. Our services are offered in a safe environment by our well-trained, professional and engaged staff and volunteer team, who are supported by an invested board of Trustees.

OUR AIM

The aim of the Vine Centre is to offer an inclusive support service focussed on clients' needs and helping them to accept and to deal with their problems in a safe environment. This assists with the growth of confidence and self-esteem that helps to facilitate change. This in turn empowers clients to reach their true potential and furthers their chances of employment, training, education, freedom from addiction, improved mental health, and assists with social interaction and reducing social isolation.

OUR VISION

'To unlock the potential of every client through personalised support.'



Chair yoga for Silvers



Barista Training at Culture Cafe



Fundraising Quiz Night



OUR SERVICES

Our services aim to offer training and development opportunities, addiction support (GASP), mental health and anger management, budgeting and benefit support, homelessness and housing sustainment. One of our huge successes is our Silvers group; a group for the over 55's to tackle social isolation.

Our job club, known as My Space, opened in 2013 and continues to support the long-term unemployed. Of the 112 attendees in the financial year 2022/2023, 35% are now employed. This is a huge achievement, not only for the individuals but for our community. Having less unemployment in the area reduces anti-social behaviour, social isolation and vulnerability, as well as improving the local economy.

One of our training projects, My Helping Hand (which supports attendees learning basic skills), was developed through My Space. We had seen many attendees job searching, who weren't actually ready to work but really needed basic support with literacy, numeracy or even developing their English skills. We have qualified tutors leading our employment and skills support services, without whom we would not have our excellent reputation with both the local statutory authority and JobCentre Plus; we have worked closely with these agencies for a number of years.

We support Asylum Seekers/Refugees and older people from the Nepali community to improve their English through conversation and reading and writing skills, using a basic IT course 'Learn My Way'. In many cases those supported are attending ESOL courses.

The Culture Cafe has been running for two years as a training and social group for those aged 18 to 55. The group offers barista training, which on completion is certified, volunteer opportunities and personal development training. An activity takes place each week such as cooking, arts and crafts and talks from external agencies; all activities are client led.

NEW SERVICES 2022/23

We are Digital:

'We are Digital' is a service funded by the Government. The Vine has previously worked with the Government on projects such as the EUSS Visas. Online appeals for benefits are now a requirement and many of those accessing our services do not have the skills or technology to do that. We successfully applied for a HMCTS (Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service) contract, to help clients to appeal digitally against benefit decisions, in particular PIP (Personal Independence Payment). As a registered Digital Centre, the Vine Centre was successful and won the contract. We also completed a cyber security assessment and we are now certified as Cyber Secure.

Stepping Out:

'Stepping Out' is a project offering floating support designed for those over 65 who need support in their own homes. This can be due to anxiety, depression, disability or clients not wanting to be a burden and ask for help; often they are feeling lonely and socially isolated. The project aims to support this client group to become digitally aware, enabling them to order groceries and prescriptions online, talk to others via social media platforms and face-time family members and friends, as well as set up their phones correctly. The project also seeks to help clients engage with the wider community by attending age specific groups within their locality, including our own services. This allows them to talk to like-minded people, which improves their mental health and well-being. 'Stepping Out' is a pilot project and will run for a year from January 2023 to December 2023. To date 39 clients have been supported.

'Switched On' (SGN Safe and Warm):

We were seeing more clients in crisis because they could not fund their energy costs. So a grant application was made to SGN to enable us to offer an energy support group called 'Switched On'. The Project is run every morning as a drop-in and for booked face-to-face or telephone appointments. Clients who are eligible are added to the Priority Register to ensure that, if there is a power outage, they are contacted and assured that they will be re-connected before other households. 'Switched On' staff give advice on energy saving tips, budgeting and work with energy companies to set up more affordable repayment plans, reduce debts and open a line of communication which ensures that those most in need don't have their utilities disconnected. The project also links in Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness to ensure that vulnerable adults have a better understanding of this serious issue as well as having conversations around safety in their homes. 'Switched On' is a pilot project that started in February 2023 and was due to end in August 2023. The project supported 305 households and SGN has now offered continuation funding until the end of January 2024.

Cosy Hub:

The Vine set up its Cosy Hub in November 2022 and it ran until March 2023, in response to high energy prices and the Cost-of-Living crisis. The Cosy Hub offered a warm space for people to go to use a computer, charge their phones, talk to a support worker, take part in activities, have a hot drink and something to eat. Those attending were struggling to heat their homes and were having to make choices between eating or heating. The Cosy Hub supported 214 individuals and handed out 62 warm packs which included blankets, flasks, food items, hats, slippers and scarfs. We will re-open the Cosy Hub in November 2023.



Fig 2 - 5 year Growth

Fig 3 - 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 Income Sources by percentage

COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

The Vine Centre's Community Cupboard was visited 3,644 times in the financial year 2022/2023. This is a 219% increase on the previous year. The beneficiaries have been families, those of pensionable age, veterans, the Nepali community, refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable adults.

As 2023 has progressed, we have regularly seen about 100 households seeking food support; some access the Community cupboard weekly and others only in emergency situations.

The Community Cupboard is accessible to all and linked with our support services. On visit four, members of the Community Cupboard are encouraged to attend budgeting sessions, link in with specialist support, attend groups and have access to training and employment services.

We promote weekly cooking sessions with a No Waste, Cooking with Confidence theme. Clients make use of any excess or ready to be thrown out food from our Community Cupboard. From this project we have published a Cookbook with recipes created by clients which offer tips such as how to save money, batch cooking and storage of food such as freezing. These books are being sold to raise further funds for our Community Cupboard.

In addition to the No-waste cooking sessions, starting in October 2023, we will be offering family cookery sessions once a week. The sessions will be held in the early evenings and allow families to cook and eat together and take any leftover food home.

OUR TEAM

At The Vine Centre, we share our work and achievements with everyone involved. Our Trustees, volunteers and clients contribute to our infrastructure projects, such as our new website design and business planning, and support us in fundraising activities including quiz nights, sporting events and Christmas campaigns.

TRUSTEES

THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Following a governance review and skills audit, we are looking to appoint additional members to the Board of Trustees. As a Trustee you will be able to use your skills and experience to support the CIO and as a Board Member will have collective influence over the strategy and direction of The Vine Centre.

We are looking for individuals who:

- Have some understanding of the difficulties our clients experience
- Can embrace the strategic objectives of the charity and contribute to their development and achievement
- Understand the needs of the local community.
- Can work as a team with other Trustees to enable the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to achieve the aims of the charity and to support fundraising activities.

WHAT THE COMMITMENT IS:

The Board of Trustees meets every quarter (4 times a year) and during October facilitates a Trustees' Away Day. Depending on the complexity of the issues, the meetings are usually around 2 hours long and are held at The Vine Centre. It is important to prepare for Board Meetings and to contribute your views and ideas.

Trustees use these meetings to:

- Look at strategic issues affecting the CIO
- Monitor its financial and operational performance
- Receive and discuss the CEO's report against plans
- Ensure that the charity staff and volunteers are on track in delivering the objectives set out in the governing document
- Ensure the CEO is properly supported and managed
- Ensure relevant policies are in place, up-to-date and reviewed annually
- Review and mitigate key risks and conflicts and update the Risk Register accordingly
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VOLUNTARY ROLE, TRAVEL EXPENSES, INDUCTION AND TRAINING

This is an unpaid, voluntary role, but reasonable travel expenses will be met. Trustees will receive induction and training.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Joyce Bellwood at joyce.bellwood@thevinecentre.org.uk who will be happy to discuss the work of the charity and arrange a visit for you to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the valuable work the charity undertakes.